



Democratic Services

# Corporate Parenting Panel

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**Tuesday, 21 March 2017**

**18:30**

**Room 4 (Civic Offices)**

**Civic Offices**

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Miles (Chair) Crooks (Vice-Chair) Hopkins (Vice-Chair)  
Betteley Cannon Clancy Green and Nolan

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## **A G E N D A**

1.     **Apologies**  
To receive any apologies of absence.
2.     **Disclosures of Interest**  
Councillors to declare any disclosable pecuniary interests, or personal interests (including other pecuniary interests) they may have in the business to be transacted, and officers to disclose any interests they may have in any contract to be considered.
3.     **Minutes** 5 - 10  
To approve, and the Chair to sign as a correct record, the Minutes of the meeting of the Corporate Parenting Panel held on 15 November 2016 (Item 3).
4.     **Draft Corporate Parenting Panel Annual Report** 11 - 16  
To consider the draft Annual Report for the Corporate Parenting Panel (Item 4).
5.     **Feedback from Pizza Party** 17 - 18  
To consider feedback from the Pizza Party event held with Our Voice (Children in Care Council) (Item 5).
6.     **Future Development of the Corporate Parenting Panel** 19 - 20  
To discuss the future development of the Corporate Parenting Panel including feedback from Our Voice (Item 6).

Minutes of the CORPORATE PARENTING PANEL held on TUESDAY 15 NOVEMBER 2016 at 6.30 pm

**Present:** Councillor Miles (Chair)

Councillors Betteley, Cannon, Clancy, Crooks, Green, V Hopkins and Nolan

**Officers:** N Rayner (Service Director [Children and Families]), J Hooper (Head of Safeguarding), K Lockwood (Head of Corporate Parenting), M Mellor (Virtual School Head-Teacher), J Roberts (Independent Reviewing Officer), D Williams (National Graduate Scheme Trainee) and S Muir (Committee Manager).

**Apology:** Councillor Green

**CP17 DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST**

None received.

**CP18 MINUTES**

RESOLVED -

That the minutes of the meeting of the Panel held on 20 September 2015 be agreed and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

It was noted that young people found the format of the Minutes of the Panel's meetings to be too formal. The Chair clarified that they were required to be in this format as they were an official Council record, however he suggested that a copy could be re-written for young people in a more acceptable format and asked Members of the Panel to volunteer for this task.

The Panel also noted that at Minute CP12 Children and Young People's Participation Children in Care Council - Our Voice, it had been agreed that the Panel considered ways in which it could more actively engage with the young people in the Council's care. Accordingly involvement of young people had been scheduled for this meeting, however the young people had advised that they were not fully prepared and would prefer to attend the January meeting of the Panel.

The Panel also requested that a different environment be used for the January meeting.

Councillor Nolan requested that a copy of the Outcomes and Minutes relating to CP11 "Independent reviewing Officers Annual Report 2015/16" be circulated to Panel Members.

Councillor V Hopkins gave an update of her attendance at the Milton Keynes Safeguarding Board Annual Conference, at which the

keynote speaker, a care leaver from another Local Authority, had given an excellent presentation which had raised interesting points.

## **CP19**

### **MK Fostering 2020**

The Panel considered the presentation from Dominic Williams (National Graduate Scheme Trainee) 2015/16 with reference to the Fostering 2020 work, with a vision substantially to increase the number and range of MKC foster carers by 2020 and end new placements with independent fostering agency carers.

The National Graduate Scheme Trainee explained that he was at the first stage of a four stage project, and this scoping stage included:

- engagement with foster carers/LAC/ care leavers
- possible media creation and advertising package options
- review of recruiting foster carers best practice nationally
- work in the community to spread message to recruit foster carers and raise awareness
- increasing the Council's online presence

The National Graduate Scheme Trainee also indicated that he was trying to raise awareness of the opportunities for residents to become Foster Carers and to widen this to residents who thought that only traditional two parent families could apply.

The Panel members made a number of suggestions to increase awareness of Fostering opportunities that included:

- Letters from schools to parents that could be targeted at older children age groups.
- Dispelling the myth that only "a certain kind of person" could be a foster carer.
- Contacting large employers in Milton Keynes e.g. Network rail, Santander, Homebase and Open University and offering to make presentations or training events to employees.
- Current foster children making presentations from their view of "what makes a Foster Carer", to Community and Sports Organisations.
- Councillors include at the bottom of their emails a link advertising Foster Carers.
- Leaflets for waiting areas in schools, hospitals G P Surgeries, Parish and Town Council Offices and Estate Agents
- Include a presentation with other events e.g. MK Jobs Shows, MK50 Celebrations

The Chair suggested that any further ideas to be emailed direct to the National Graduate Scheme Trainee.

The Service Director (Children and Families) indicated that from previous experience “word of mouth” had worked well to raise awareness of fostering opportunities and also that those from a wide variety of groups including those with other languages and families with older children and experience of parenting were especially sought as the needs of the possible foster children were quite diverse. She added that there was a large range support and advice from the Council’s Children and Families Service for those who were considering becoming foster carers.

The Service Director also indicated that families based locally in Milton Keynes were being targeted in order that they and the children had easy access to Milton Keynes based support and events. The only time foster families out of area were considered to be preferable to local carers was when they were a relative of a child or had moved out of area after fostering a child or when the child had an identified need to be placed outside Milton Keynes (e.g. to ensure their safety).

Head of Corporate Parenting indicated that packs for prospective Foster Carers were available and were usually hand delivered by experienced workers in order that questions could be answered efficiently. She also indicated that the availability of a wide variety of prospective foster parents helped with appropriate selection and placements in matching with young people.

RESOLVED -

1. That the presentation be received and officer colleagues be thanks for their work.
2. Suggestions to increase awareness of Fostering opportunities be sent direct [Dominic.Williams@milton-keynes.gov.uk](mailto:Dominic.Williams@milton-keynes.gov.uk).

**CP20**

### **VIRTUAL SCHOOL ANNUAL REPORT 2016**

The Virtual School Head Teacher presented the annual report of the Virtual School for 2016 and the School Improvement Plan 2016/17.

It was reported that at September 2016 Milton Keynes had 373 children and young people in care of which 350 were aged between 3 and 18 years. The Virtual School Head Teacher clarified that the Virtual School supported the education of children in care who were enrolled at schools and remained their schools’ responsibility.

The Virtual School Head Teacher explained that since the appointment of Welfare Call to collect data from schools recording the progress of Virtual School pupils, which was now its second year, they were building up patterns which informed where resources should be targeted to enable further improvements. She also clarified that statistically insignificant numbers were also analysed to give an accurate picture.

The Virtual School Head Teacher also explained that her team now included, in addition to herself, a Senior Education Officer, two Personal Education Plan (PEP) Quality and Compliance Officers, an Early Years Officer to support preschool settings and an Independent Advice and Guidance Officer (IAG). The IAG Officer commissioned from the Council's IAG team supported young people in year 11 and also offered advice to and guidance to Care Leavers. These appointments enabled the Virtual School Head Teacher to work more closely with young people and their schools, including maintaining a particular focus on those who had been excluded from school for any reason.

In response to questions from Panel members, the Virtual School Head Teacher clarified that:

- That between 1 April 2015 and 31 March 2016, data driven projects and SIP targets had identified that a few of the reporting cohort seemed to be struggling with Maths as the age 11 expectation had not been met therefore these children would be offered support in Year 7 Maths;
- "Nimble" Tablets were used for Key Stage 2-4 for Reading Writing and Maths and were being rolled out through the Personal Education Plans (PEP's);
- The Milton Keynes attainment data for the GCSE results for Looked After Children was above the national and Ofsted targets;
- "Aiming Higher" as a longer term aim for Looked After Children to be encouraged to consider University and Further Education;
- The monitoring of attendance and exclusion of Looked After Children at school was robust, any anomalies could always be quickly explained and measurement of this priority could be included in future and;
- School Governors be invited to Safeguarding training.

The Panel discussed the presentation in depth and noted the new priorities for 2016-2017.

RESOLVED -

1. That the presentation and School Improvement Plan 2016-17 be noted.
2. That the new priorities for 2016-2017 be noted.

## **CP21**

### **LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN - CHRISTMAS EVENT**

The Head of Safeguarding summarised that the Christmas Event that Looked After Children were planning for Tuesday 20 December included three sessions throughout the day to allow Panel members to attend and take part in activities at their most convenient time:



10.30 - 11.30am.

11.30 - 12.30am

12.30 - 1.30pm

The Head of Safeguarding clarified that if Panel members were unable to attend any of the hourly sessions above, the best time to attend would be for the Shared Lunch at 1.30 - 3.30pm. This would give Panel members the opportunity to speak to the young people in a more relaxed setting and to consider ideas for a "Promise to Looked after Children" from the Panel.

The Head of Safeguarding also advised that the invitation would be sent again to Panel Members.

RESOLVED -

Those Committee members noted the invitation to the Looked After Children Christmas Event on 20 December 2016.

**CP22**

### **REGULATION 44 REPORT AND FEEDBACK FROM COUNCILLOR VISITS**

The Panel noted that Regulation 44 visits had been made to the Council's children's homes during September and October 2016.

Head of Safeguarding explained that the Regulation 44 Reports were compiled by the National Youth Advocacy Service (NYAS) which was a UK charity providing information, advice, advocacy and legal representation to children, young people and vulnerable adults.

She asked Councillors for their feedback about the new style of reporting and the comments received were positive although they Panel had concerns about client confidentiality of some of the information that was included.

The Chair requested that the NYAS Visitor be asked to attend a future meeting of the Panel and this could be included in the work programme.

RESOLVED -

1. That details of the visits be noted.
2. That the NYAS Visitor be invited to a future meeting of the Panel.

THE CHAIR CLOSED THE MEETING 8.05 PM



**ANNUAL REPORT OF THE WORK OF THE MILTON KEYNES CORPORATE PARENTING PANEL 2016/17**

Chair of the Corporate Parenting Panel: Councillor Miles

Author and contact: Kelly Lockwood (Head of Corporate Parenting [Children and Families])  
Tel: 01908 253473

**Executive Summary:**

The Corporate Parenting Panel oversees how the Council fulfils its responsibilities as a Corporate Parent to Milton Keynes' children and young people in care and care leavers. This annual report provides Councillors, as "Corporate Parents", with information about our children and young people and summarises the Panel's work during the council year 2016/17. The report also explains how the Panel have engaged with young people during the year and plans to develop this in 2017/18. Councillors are invited to suggest any additional issues which they, as Corporate Parents, would like the Panel to address.

***[NB the Annex to this report, detailing year end key information about Milton Keynes children and young people in care and Care Leavers, will be added when the data is available and verified in April 2017.]***

**1. Recommendation(s)**

1.1 Councillors are recommended to:

- (a) Receive the report and ensure their personal awareness of the needs of the children and young people for whom they are Corporate Parents;
- (b) Note the work undertaken on their behalf in 2016/17 by members of the Corporate Parenting Panel; and
- (c) Note and comment on the emerging agenda for the work of the Corporate Parenting Panel in 2017/18.

**2. Issues**

2.1 Essential information for all Corporate Parents about the children and young people living in and leaving Milton Keynes Council Care is included in the Annex to the report. *[See note in executive summary.]*

2.2 Milton Keynes Corporate Parenting Panel has met formally on four occasions during the 2016/17 Council year. Its members are Councillors Betteley, Cannon, Clancy, Crooks, Green, V Hopkins, Miles and Nolan. The Panel has

been chaired by Councillor Miles, with the support of the two vice-chairs, Councillors Crooks and Hopkins. The Panel has met informally on one occasion during the year (see point 2.6). Members have also visited the council's children's homes and attended social events with children, staff and parents/carers.

2.3 During the year, the Panel has received, considered and discussed reports from professionals about a number of priority issues for Milton Keynes children in care and care leavers.

2.4 The key issues discussed at Panel were:

- **The Education of Children in Care.** The Panel met with the Virtual School Headteacher on several occasions. They discussed young people's examination and key stage performance, the Virtual School improvement plan for 2016/17, the annual report of the Virtual School and alternative education provision for Looked After young people in Milton Keynes.

The Virtual School Headteacher highlighted that the results at Key Stage 1 had been better than predicted, whilst the results at Key Stage 2 and GCSE were not as good as hoped. The Panel considered the reasons for this, which included changes to the required standards. The Panel noted the individual achievements of young people and talked about how we can best encourage our young people to remain in education beyond their GCSEs. The Annual Report of the Virtual School identified that attendance in the Virtual School remains good, with no unexplainable persistent absence. Exclusions from school were reducing, but this remained an area of concern; the Panel were pleased to hear that schools were being appropriately challenged about this. The Annual Report also covered attainment and specifically noted the improved achievement of unaccompanied asylum seeking children, illustrated by an example of one young person's success. The report detailed progress made against the Virtual School's priorities for the previous year (2015/16) and the priorities for the current year (2016/17). Councillor Miles represented the Panel on the Virtual School's governing body throughout the year.

The Panel received a joint presentation from the Virtual School Headteacher and the Executive Principal of the Bridge Academy. This detailed the alternative education provisions available to children in care in Milton Keynes and the way in which these work with support from the Virtual School to enable children in care to progress educationally. The presentation included case studies which illustrated the impact of provision on individual young people. The Panel asked questions of both professionals and engaged in discussion around the topic.

- **The Health of Children in Care.** The Panel received and reviewed the annual report for the statutory health services provided to Milton Keynes Children in Care during the year 2015/16. Members discussed key areas, including a new protocol for health assessments of newly arrived asylum

seekers in partnership with Thames Valley Police, the increase in demand for health services due to the increase in numbers of looked after children and joint work with doctors at Milton Keynes hospital to provide timely and effective health checks. The Panel also heard about the Care Quality Commission review of services for looked after children and safeguarding in Milton Keynes (the formal report was not published at the time of the discussion). The Panel reviewed the information and asked questions about the health support provided to care leavers, how young people's views are included in the Health and Social care forum and the potential contribution of other agencies to health assessments of children in care.

- **The role of the Independent Review Officer (IRO).** The Panel considered the annual report of the IROs for the previous year (2015/16). The role of the IRO was outlined to the Panel, along with information about the significant changes and developments that had taken place in the IRO service. This included responding effectively to the impact of an increase in the number of children in care. The Panel reviewed the information and asked questions around key areas. This included the use of interpreters to communicate with children whose first language was not English (in response to the increase in the number of unaccompanied asylum seeking children), changes to mid-year reviews (in line with individual young people's wishes about how these would best meet their needs), the creativity of the IROs and their contribution to wider service improvements and developments, the role of IROs in assessing the appropriateness of voluntary care arrangements and work to ensure that staff across the reviewing service understood each other's roles and shared their skills.
- **Work to increase the recruitment of foster carers in Milton Keynes.** The Panel received a presentation from a National Graduate Scheme Trainee working on placement with the fostering team. He detailed ongoing work to increase the number of 'in house' Milton Keynes foster carers, particularly for children with complex and challenging behaviours. The Panel heard about '*MK Fostering 2020*,' the service vision that all children will, if appropriate, be placed with internal foster carers by 2020 and that external placements will only be used where a child's specific needs require this (e.g. if they are already settled and thriving in a long-standing external placement). The Panel was asked to support this vision and to suggest additional ideas and promotion opportunities for foster carer recruitment. The Panel responded very positively to this and agreed to take this forward.
- **Children and Young People's Participation.** The Panel received a report from the Participation Youth Worker explaining how young people in care and care leavers are involved in service development and have opportunities to celebrate their achievements. The report detailed instances of young people participating in foster carer training, of young people being part of the commissioning and tendering process for supported accommodation and being consulted on developments with the contact centre. There were also examples of *Our Voice* (formerly the Milton Keynes Children in Care Council, *TCTF*) developing a 'coming into

care' pack and rebranding their logo and of new groups being developed, such as the 'New2UK' group for asylum seeking young people

The Panel was provided with the findings of the *Children and Young People's Survey* of children in care. These included young people's views about social worker involvement, the care they received and the things that could make life better for children and care leavers. Panel reviewed this information and asked questions about the findings.

Further involvement of the Panel with children and young people in care and care leavers are detailed in paragraphs 2.5-2.7

- 2.5 During 2016/17, the Corporate Parenting Panel continued to engage with children and young people. Members of the Panel visited the council's children's homes, Furze House and Westminster House, and met with parents, children and staff. The Panel also received summary reports of the monthly visits to the homes by an independent visitor to provide assurance about the quality of care, safeguarding, leadership and other key issues. Members attended events with children, young people and carers, including Fostering Fun Day and True Triumph (our annual celebration and awards evening for Children in Care), and a Christmas meal hosted by our young people.
- 2.6 Panel members have continued to prioritise young people's participation and to explore how to develop their engagement in the Panel's work. An informal Panel meeting was hosted by the children and young people at the *Our Voice* venue in January 2017. The meeting provided an opportunity for the children and young people to get to know members of the Panel through group activities and to talk about their issues in small group discussions with Panel members.
- 2.7 Members have discussed a range of proposals to develop participation and impact, including regular less formal joint meetings with young people and involving them in setting the Panel's 2017/18 priorities.
- 2.8 Milton Keynes Council's services for children in need of help and protection and care leavers and Local Safeguarding Children Board were inspected by Ofsted in September 2017. Two members of the Corporate Parenting Panel, Councillors Miles and Crooks, met the inspectors in their respective roles as Chairs of the Corporate Parenting Panel and of the Children and Young People's Committee. The Panel have subsequently received feedback about the inspection findings and had the opportunity to review the post-inspection action plan. The Panel is strongly committed to the recommendations and taking an active interest in the work required to put these into practice. The action plan was formally scrutinised by the Children and Young People's committee on 8 February 2017.

### 3. Legal

- 3.1 The Council's role as a Corporate Parent is governed by legislation (primarily the Children Act 1989), associated guidance and regulations and case law. The Council's legal department provides clear advice as required by officers in their discharge of the council's corporate parenting responsibilities for individual children and young people.

### 4. Other implications

Y	Equalities/Diversity	N	Sustainability	Y	Human Rights
N	E-Government	Y	Stakeholders	N	Crime and Disorder

Background Papers: Milton Keynes Children in Care (Looked After Children) and Care Leavers Key Data 2016/17 *(to be added in April 2017)*





## Our Voice & Corporate Parenting Panel Pizza Party Tuesday 17 January 2017

### MINUTES

#### Context

At the 'Our Voice' Festive meal on Tuesday 20 December 2016 young people were split into small groups and asked to identify areas for improvements for 2017. Each group identified areas and put forward the one area they felt was the most important. The three groups identified the following three areas:

- 1) **Health Assessments** – ensuring child focused assessments and health information and support
- 2) **Social Workers** – improving relationships between children and young people and social workers
- 3) **Dreams and aspirations** – providing more opportunities for young people to explore a variety of future career options or dream jobs.

All young people present at the festive meal (20 young people attended) voted on which issue they would like Our Voice and CPP to concentrate on. The following two areas were chosen:

#### 1) Health Assessments

- We know that they are very important!
- Everything should be done to ensure that they are child friendly
- More health information should be available
- Explore health assessments for care leavers especially those staying put
- Ensuring that young people understand 'consent'

#### 2) Social workers

- More opportunities to see and have our views heard by our social workers
- More opportunities to see social workers outside the home
- Easier ways to get in contact with social workers between visits
- The need to see my social worker regardless of the stability of my placement

## **Pizza Party Discussion**

During the pizza party Our Voice and CPP members discussed the two areas in more detail. The discussion incorporated the following three questions:

- What is the issue?
- How can the issue be resolved?
- Who should be involved in the resolution?

### **1) Health Assessments**

All agreed that health assessments are important and like the LAC nurses. Nearly all were seen in the foster placement. Discussed other places assessments could take place including school and Dr's surgery.

More information for CIC about health services available to them

More information about the actual health assessment and what it is for

Should be able to keep records of assessments and personal health information

Sexual health – how can this be talked about and at what point?

Access to mental health services and more information about mental health issues faced by CIC

First aid training for CIC

LAC nurses should be involved, brook, compass and the hospital

Referring to other services – i.e. dentist and opticians

Supporting young people reaching care leaving age to access health services independently

### **2) Social Workers**

Would like to see their own social workers more

Would like more stability within the social work team – young people spoke about changes in social workers and the number of social workers they had

Like seeing IROs before reviews to talk to them face to face

Would like to be more involved in social worker training especially around engaging with young people

Would like to meet with Sharon Godfrey (Social Work Team Manager) more

Make our own decisions more and inform us of what is going on

Would like to do more activities with their social worker as these support relationship development, especially if they have changed social worker. This could be as simple as a cup of coffee or a bowling trip.

If a social worker does change, they would like them to be prepared and know more about their circumstances.

Opportunities to see their social workers independently of their foster carers

Our Voice are in the process of deciding some future steps as a result of these discussions.

<p><b>Future development of the Corporate Parenting Panel in 2017/18 – young people’s responses to suggested changes</b></p>	
<p><b>Proposal</b></p>	<p><b>View of young people</b></p>
<p>1. Young people to become more central to the panel's work. Continue with 6 Corporate Parenting Panels per year, but with 3 of these being 'informal' meetings with young people; a recent example of this being the pizza party in January 2017. Consider an earlier start time of 6pm.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Young people are keen for this to happen. They enjoyed the Pizza Party and meeting Corporate Parenting Panel members.</li> <li>● It is felt important that there is an interactive activity as well as the discussions to enhance the relationship building and productivity of the young people. The young people have suggested cake decorating and 'afternoon tea' for the next one!</li> <li>● The length of the discussion period can be extended but it is recommended that this takes place slowly and over a couple of meetings.</li> <li>● It was also considered important to have actions for both groups at the end of the meetings arising from the discussions that have taken place.</li> </ul>
<p>2. The focus of the Corporate Parenting Panels for the year, in the form of 'themes', decided by the young people at the beginning of the year. This will provide direction for the panel discussions and invitations to external professionals to attend meetings to progress and develop the themes. The themes could form the focus of the annual report, with progress documented. Outcomes and progress could be measured against the themes and associated objectives.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● At the festive meal, the young people identified two key issues for 2017:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➢ health of children looked after;</li> <li>➢ Social workers.</li> </ul> </li> <li>● The young people are keen for these to continue throughout the coming year. It is felt that further consideration needs to be given to how we will deliver change within these issues.</li> <li>● The 'Bright Spots' survey of all school age children in care is currently being completed. The participation support workers suggest that this data should be looked at in relation to the two identified key issues and to identify another key issue for the year.</li> <li>● It was suggested that the festive meal could be the forum each year for the young people to direct future key issues as well as to celebrate outcomes. This could be part of the participation cycle.</li> </ul>

Proposal	View of young people
<p>3. Feedback to be given to young people in a way that they consider to be useful.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Positive feedback was received about the young people's version of the Corporate Parenting Panel minutes. Young people would be keen for the Corporate Parenting Panel to present these at the informal meetings if the panel agree to this.</li> <li>• It has also been suggested that the minutes could be added to the KICC:MK website for all young people in care and care leavers to access.</li> <li>• It is felt that the main thing is that feedback must not be arduous.</li> </ul>
<p>4. Attendance of Corporate Parenting Panel members at other events and groups as well as residential homes.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participation would like to facilitate this, but they need to check with the youth club first as the club is considered a social and safe place for the young people.</li> <li>• There are also other activities where attendance by Corporate Parenting Panel members would be welcomed. These include True Triumph, the festive meal and summer activities.</li> <li>• Other engagement avenues to explore are the New2UK group and CIC+ youth club for those young people who are 16+.</li> </ul>
<p>5. Would the young people be able to meet informally in March to discuss these proposals?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Our Voice has a busy schedule in March with the Bright Spots survey, participating in staff recruitment and foster carer training. They do not think that they can fit in an additional informal meeting.</li> <li>• Would Councillors Miles (CPP Chair) and Nolan (lead member) be available to attend part of the Our Voice meeting in March? <i>NB this may not be feasible as it is the same night as the formal Corporate Parenting Panel.</i></li> <li>• The next informal meeting could be in May.</li> </ul>

Document compiled by Kelly Lockwood (Head of Corporate Parenting)  
Feedback collated by: Emma Hosking (Youth Participation Worker) and Richard Lee (Youth Worker)